

a rollcall vote to see who is for it and who is against it.

It is rare for such a broad and diverse coalition to come together in support of legislation. But they have done so to end the flagrant abuses that hurt so many families. The choice is clear. The Senate should stand with patients, families and physicians, not the well-heeled special interests that put profits ahead of patients.

The American people know what is going on. Movie audiences across the country erupt in cheers when actress Helen Hunt attacks the abuses of managed care in the film "As Good As It Gets." Helen Hunt won an Oscar for that performance, but managed care is not winning any Oscars from the American people. Everyone knows that managed care today is not as good as it gets.

It is time for Congress to end the abuses of patients and physicians by HMOs and managed care health plans. Too often, managed care is mismanaged care. No amount of distortions or smokescreens by insurance companies can change those facts. A Patients' Bill of Rights can stop these abuses, and let's pass it before more patients have to suffer.

We want to tell our friends on the other side of the aisle that they are going to see this amendment day after day after day after day, until this body has a chance to debate it and vote on it. Let me give the assurance of that.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask that I be allowed to proceed as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEBATING THE HEALTH CARE BILL

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I know there has been some brouhaha this afternoon about not being able to debate a health care bill, and I came down here earlier today to talk about the bill we were on, the VA-HUD bill, an extremely important piece of legislation that was set regularly on this agenda. Amendments were being offered to it. Everybody has known for some time that we were going to be dealing with health care and managed care and HMOs and that sort of thing. It is certainly going to be coming up on our agenda when the time is right, and everybody will have full opportunity to debate that issue. I hope we do. I expect we can make some improvement in our health care policy in America.

But the bill that we were on was important. I submit it was a political act by people in this body to derail where we were going, to introduce onto the VA-HUD bill this kind of massive change in agenda to try to create a debate on health care when this body was on another item. That is what the majority leader is for, to try to set agenda in a rational way. He has done that. We are going to be on health care later, but we should have stayed on the bill that we were on.

NASA

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I am disappointed the administration has seen fit to reduce NASA's budget by \$183 million this year. Frankly, I think it ought to be increased. I would like to share a couple of thoughts about that with the Members of this body and the people who may be listening.

From 1983 to 1992, NASA's budget went up from \$7 to \$14 billion. That is less than 1 percent of the national budget in this country, but that was a significant increase. During that time, they made two planetary launches. In the last number of years, that budget has seen a significant reduction. In fact, according to a committee that was formed in 1991, a committee on the future of space formed by President Bush, they had the expenditures for NASA going up to as high as \$40 or \$50 billion. As it turned out, under the previously agreed-upon budget for NASA, we should be at about \$16 or \$18 billion. In fact, that budget has been cut every year, and over the last 5 years they have sustained a \$27 billion reduction in what was projected for their budget even under our last budget agreement.

People say, "Jeff, that is just numbers; it doesn't mean much." NASA has cut its employees since 1993 by 25 percent. They have cut their employees 25 percent. There is no agency in this American Government that has done a better job of producing more for less than they have.

In fact, the fiscal year 1994 budget for NASA was \$14.5 billion, and the fiscal year 1998 for NASA is \$13.6 billion.

During this same time, they have been sustaining these substantial losses in income. They are now making planetary launches one every 10 weeks. Whereas they used to do two planetary launches in 9 years, they are now doing them one every 10 weeks, even though their budget is down and employees are down 25 percent. They are doing some remarkable things.

Last July 4, the Martian lander landed, and we saw those vivid photographs that were shipped all over the world. The American people and the people of the world stood in amazement as we saw the actual ground of the planet Mars. It was an exciting time. My family and I watched that in our home with amazement and pride at what this country had accomplished.

Let me point this out: 20 years before, we had done another Martian

landing. We had not had one in 20 years. The Martian landing 20 years before, in actual dollars, cost 10 times as much as the one last year. They were able to accomplish this landing last year for one-tenth of the cost 20 years before.

This is the kind of achievement that is important for our country. The whole world watched it. Mr. Dan Goldin, who directs the NASA program, told us that they had more hits on their web site from around the world than they even had in the United States. It was by far the biggest single time of people tuning in to the NASA web site from all over the world.

The world was watching America. We are the leader in space. We need to remain the leader in space. We are a nation of explorers. That is our heart and soul. That is our national characteristic. We have explored this Earth pretty well. We are now exploring the heavens. We need to continue forward with that.

Sure, the space station has gone over, but from the numbers I have just told you, even though the space station has cost more than it should—and a lot of that is involved with trying to work with the Russians, who have not been very effective in fulfilling their portion of it, and we need to evaluate that—everything else they have been doing has been doing more for less.

We are going to be able to continue to have repeat launches at less cost and more success and highly technical launches that can bring us the kind of science and improvements in our life that can benefit the entire world. This is the kind of thing with which America needs to be involved. I am excited about it.

I wish we were still on that bill. I had some things to say about it. We are going to handle health care as we go down the road, but I think it is important for the people of America to note that we moved off that bill because the other party sought to change the agenda that was set, to go off on an entirely new tangent, attaching to this bill an entirely different subject matter that requires a great deal of debate and discussion. That was not the appropriate thing to do, and the majority leader did the only thing he could, which is pull down the bill.

Mr. President, I thank you for this time, and I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, July 6, 1998, the federal debt stood at